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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

Issue #10
May 2, 1975

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ACTIONS.....

Overdue and Due Dates.....

- ... Agency responses to ADP applications system survey are overdue. See article in "Central Services" section for details.
- ... Agencies were to submit their conversion costs estimates to ADS by April 25 (see Issue #5 for background). (Contact: Joe Erb, ADS, ext. 72803)
- ... All agencies have not yet submitted the interim A-11 financial data to ADS. The deadline was April 14. In order to meet the OMB deadline, this must be submitted ASAP (see Issue #5 for background). (Contact: Joe Erb, ADS, ext. 72803)
- ... Council members responses to the Newsletter questionnaire are due May 15 to Jan Bucknell, Room 124-E.

Highlights of May 1 Council Meeting.....

A special meeting of the Council will be held Thursday, May 8, 2 p.m., in Room 3840S to discuss the Project Overhead reports. The reports will be distributed to the Council by the first of the week.

Policy regarding foreign travel was discussed. A memorandum containing the recommendations of the Council will be forwarded to the Assistant Secretaries after further review with the agencies which have foreign travel.

Mr. Bolduc discussed the Interagency Committee on Overseas Assessments and Benefits. He asked if any agencies were interested in being represented on the 5 subcommittees - Housing, Hardship Incentives, Relocation Costs, Compensation for Extraordinary Living Costs, and Compensation for Inadequate Community Services. FAS is serving on one; SCS and ARS indicated a desire to be represented.

The Council discussed a proposed Secretary's memo on Representation of Minorities and Women on Agricultural Committees.

The ADS Conference will be held at the Downingtown Inn, Downingtown, Pa. Tentative dates are June 4, 5, and 6.

It was announced that GAO is initiating a study on problems involved in using manpower ceilings as a control on Federal agencies. The study will involve reviews in headquarters and at least one major field station.

Mr. Bolduc's February 6 memo on the New Orleans conference shows the Council as being the responsible entity for certain items. The input for those items should be sent to Mr. Bolduc who will consolidate them to send to NFC.

RECENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS.....

PRESIDENT VETOES EMERGENCY FARM SUPPORT BILL..... President Ford cited several reasons for his veto of H.R. 4296 which would:

- ... Encourage production for an "artificial" market; that is, the Government rather than the real market, through excessive and inconsistent increases in price support levels for wheat, feed grains, cotton, and soybeans.
- ... Create financial hardship on the Federal budget, taxpayers, farmers and consumers through increased costs. Current estimates are that the bill will add an inflationary \$1.8 billion to outlays for the 1975 crop alone.

As an alternative to the bill, the Department is considering action to increase price support loan rates for wheat, corn, and other feed grains. (Contact: Chuck Jewell, OMF, ext. 76176)

HOUSE PASSES BILL EXTENDING FOOD PROGRAMS..... H.R. 4222 amends the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts by extending and revising the special food service program for children and the school breakfast programs. Several floor amendments were adopted before passage on April 28. Increased Federal costs under these amendments would be about \$1 billion. (Contact: Bob Buchanan, OMF, ext. 72327)

EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT PROGRESSES..... This bill provides nearly \$1 billion (\$896.6 million in the House version, \$906.6 million in the Senate bill) for FmHA, SCS and FS programs which would substantially increase employment. The bill is presently in conference. However, the significant increase in FY 1975 spending may result in a Presidential veto. (Contact: Chuck Jewell, OMF, ext. 76176)

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PER DIEM BILL SEESAWS BETWEEN SENATE AND HOUSE.....On March 20, the Senate passed S. 172. Included was a provision to make the increased per diem rates applicable to Senators and Senate staff employees traveling on official business. The House passed the bill on April 21 without that provision. The Senate amended the bill on April 30 to put the provision back in. The bill provides for an increase in the maximum per diem rate from \$25 to \$35 per day and in the mileage allowances to a minimum of 15¢- and maximum of 20¢-a-mile. It's the House's turn to act on the bill now. (Contact: Jacquelyn White, OMF, ext. 74654)

TOTAL SPENDING FOR FY 1976 CONSIDERED BY CONGRESS.....This week, both Houses of Congress considered concurrent resolutions which contain estimates of total outlays for FY 1976. Conference action on a concurrent resolution is expected before May 15. (Contact: Chuck Jewell, OMF, ext. 76176)

OI INSTALLS 24-HOUR ALERT SYSTEM.....This is to assure the availability of an OI staff representative at all time to key Department officials. The OI official on duty will receive reports of critical incidents, prescribe necessary investigative or security action, and inform those who need to know. The 24-hour telephone number has been furnished to the Secretariat and agency heads. Others may report critical incidents during normal working hours by calling L.L. Free, Assistant Director, OI, ext. 76915. (Contact: Rod Elam, OI, ext. 75241)

OI TO HOLD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE.....OI Regional Directors and Headquarters officials will meet in Washington May 6-8 to discuss financial management controls for FY 1976 appropriations. J.P. Bolduc will discuss financial management principles. Personnel, supervision and travel problems will also be reviewed and discussed. (Contact: Rod Elam, OI, ext. 75241)

SEMINAR SCHEDULED ON FOI AND PRIVACY.....The Association of Federal Investigators has scheduled a seminar for May 28-29 at the Washington Hotel on the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act. Speakers include representatives of consumer groups, legislative committees, and Executive Branch agencies. (Contact: Rod Elam, OI, ext. 75241)

DEPARTMENT TO LINK TWO MAJOR REPORTS.....At OMB's request, USDA is bringing two major reports into alignment -- The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance and the Federal Outlays Report. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance describes all Federal programs which provide Federal assistance. The Federal Outlays Report shows where Federal funds are spent by geographic location. When this review is completed, it will be possible to ascertain, by program, the amount of Federal assistance provided to any given geographical location. (Contact: Janice Stone, OMF, ext. 73671)

PERSONNEL

USDA SPANISH SPEAKING PROGRAM SPONSORS OPEN MEETING.....It was held April 22 in Jefferson Auditorium and brought together USDA officials at all levels and the Spanish Speaking Community. Among the topics discussed were the problems of Spanish Speaking Women and the efforts and progress of the Spanish Speaking Program. The EEO staff is making plans to sponsor an EEO Week sometime during September to cover all aspects of the USDA EEO Program. (Contact: Medardo Sanchez, OP, ext. 72635)

AGENCIES VARY IN QUALITY OF HONOR AWARD NOMINATIONS.....At the April 10 meeting of the Management Council, Mr. Bolduc briefly discussed the reaction of the Honor Awards Committee to agency nominations. Some agencies prepared outstanding submissions; other agencies did not do so well. Here are the main criticisms about the poorly prepared submissions: (1) emphasis on job responsibility, procedure used, and approach developed rather than specific accomplishments; (2) retirement testimonials; (3) general or vague statements; (4) statistics used without a basis for comparison; and (5) more facts needed (i.e., the ultimate effect of the achievement on the farmer or consumer). OP is willing to counsel agencies on appropriate techniques to improve the quality of submissions. (Contact: J.P. Bolduc, SEC, ext. 77247)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

DISTRIBUTION MADE OF USDA MINORITY BUSINESS ASSISTANCE HANDBOOK.....Replacing P&O Handbook No. 7, this publication is to provide a better understanding of minority enterprise programs and to assist in the attainment of USDA program goals. It is to be used as an aid in complying with the requirements of the Federal Procurement Regulations. Additional copies may be obtained from OEO, Rural Minority Business Assistance Division. (Contact: J. Fred King, OEO, ext. 77117)

CENTRAL SERVICES

RESPONSES OVERDUE ON ADP APPLICATIONS SYSTEM SURVEY.....The completion of this survey is critical to the procurement of the new computer systems for the Department. Forms describing major applications were due Feb. 17 and the minor applications forms on April 15. 8 agencies met the Feb. 17 deadline and 3 met the April 15 deadline. However, approximately 40% of the major applications forms had to be rejected. The following problems are seriously affecting the processing of the forms by ADS:

- a. Late submissions
- b. Illegible submissions
- c. Failure to follow the form instructions
- d. Extraneous information on the forms
- e. The lack of a transmittal memorandum indicating whether the applications are major or minor and whether the submission is partial or complete.

Your cooperation in timely and accurate submissions is urgently requested. (Contact: Joe Erb, ADS, ext. 72803)

OTHER

SECRETARY STRESSES OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SAVINGS BOND CAMPAIGN....He has urged agencies with a low percentage of participation to be certain that all employees have the chance to buy bonds. To date, there has been no significant increase from the previous reports in Issues #8 and #9 of the Newsletter. The campaign has been extended through May. (Contact: R.R. Rhodes, ARS, ext. 68401.)